

# Mustaches for Kids

## Chapter Guidelines

### Overview

Mustaches for Kids is an annual Mustache-growing fundraiser that is held in cities throughout the United States and Canada. Through word of mouth enthusiasm and serendipitous internet searches, many individuals discover our organization and express interest in starting a chapter in their city, town, hamlet, or village. We applaud those who have the energy and motivation to step up and grow with us.

The downloadable document on this page articulates a series of guidelines for establishing and running a M4K chapter. We are a decentralized, hands-off operation, so these instructions should be taken more as a summary of the spirit of our organization and not a firm prescription of how to do things. We always want to allow individual chapters some leeway to tailor their fundraiser to their own communities.

That said, these guidelines have been developed over many years of Mustache growing and fundraising, and they reflect the cumulative expertise of organizers and the distilled upside of much trial and error. And furthermore, no matter how many liberties you take with the overall organization of your chapter, we ask that you and your Growers strictly abide by the Mustache Growing Rules. This is MUSTACHES for Kids, after all. Not Creative Facial Hair for Kids. Or I-Started-To-Grow-A-Mustache-But-Decided-To-Turn-It-Into-A-Goatee For Kids.

More than anything, Mustaches for Kids is about attitude. Luckily, the type of person most likely to read about M4K and think, "I've found my calling" is probably someone who will intuitively understand the spirit of our organization. It is our hope that the following guidelines articulate the necessary nuts-and-bolts to help turn this energy into an organizational framework that allows Mustaches in your community to soar like beautiful eagles. Beautiful eagles with facial hair. Who happen to raise money for charity.

### Charity/Fundraising

Mustaches for Kids chapters are free to determine the charity (or charities) to which their donations will be directed. For most of our history, the Make-A-Wish Foundation has been the recipient of our fundraising efforts. However, in recent years, several chapters have chosen to raise money for different organizations. Hurricane Katrina, in particular, provided an impetus for this change. We trust that Chapter organizers will be able to choose a recipient that best reflects the needs of their own communities and the philanthropic interests of their participants.

Chapter organizers are responsible for collecting cash and checks and forwarding them to the charity. This is most easily done at the Sweetest Stache Competition, where Grower attendance is highest and fundraising efforts for most of them have concluded. Organizers may announce the fundraising total to the assembled guests, who are sure to be impressed that such a seemingly trivial grooming exercise can do so much good.

## Rules

The founders of Mustaches for Kids established a series of Mustache growing rules that stand to this day. We have never seen the need to alter them, as they are comprehensive and just. Most of our chapters post the rules on their websites and chapter organizers are encouraged to cut, paste, and edit as needed. However, please note that our two most important rules—that faces, minus the mustache, must be shaved a minimum of one time per week and that the Mustache may only extend from “corner to corner”—should be strictly observed.

## Calendar

Growing Season typically lasts for four weeks, roughly between Thanksgiving and Christmas. We have found that the holiday season, while a busy time of year, is one when charitable impulses are most likely to be acted upon. In addition, the increase in large-scale social events (office parties, family gatherings, etc) and alcoholic consumption during this time period provides a concentrated context for Mustache exposure and the solicitation of donations. We receive many inquiries about running fundraisers during other times of the year. While we always encourage the convergence Mustache growth and charity, we would like to emphasize the intangible appeal of following the standard Growing Season calendar. The we’re-in-this-together spirit that comes with having hundreds of partners-in-stache cannot be replicated during other times of the year.

That said, a typical Growing Season calendar might look something like this:

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| <i>Week 1</i>  | Info session and meet-and-greet, in which chapter organizers recruit Growers and make themselves available to answer questions.                            |
| <i>Week 2</i>  | Shaving Day. This is the official kickoff of Growing Season. Per Mustache growing rules, all participants must shave their ENTIRE FACES clean on this day. |
| <i>Week 3</i>  | Checkpoint 1   |
| <i>Week 4</i>  | Checkpoint 2   |
| <i>Week 5:</i> | Checkpoint 3   |
| <i>Week 6</i>  | Sweetest Stache Competition  |

## Emails

One of the best ways to promote Mustache solidarity and to spread the gospel of our undertaking is through regular emails. Typically, a chapter organizer will send out a recruitment pitch two weeks before Shaving Day to alert potential Growers and the general public that Growing Season is nigh. That initial email should contain a general overview of the fundraiser, as well as Mustache growing rules and FAQs, both of which can be found on individual chapter websites.

Mustaches for Kids is a staunchly word-of-mouth operation, and a catchy email that can be forwarded, printed, or otherwise distributed is the best way to gain support and stir up interest. Chapter organizers

should send out one email per week during Growing Season, reminding your troops about upcoming events and contributing to general Mustache enthusiasm.

## Checkpoints

Checkpoints are weekly meetings at local watering holes that serve both practical and social purposes. Growing a Mustache can be a lonely endeavor, filled with moments of self-doubt. By providing a venue for Growers to interact, Checkpoints play a crucial role in strengthening the hairy bonds that hold us together. They are also used to distribute publicity materials and other paraphernalia and as an excuse to drink beer. By the second or third Checkpoint, your assembled Growers will be a visible presence at even the most crowded bar, and the curiosity of onlookers provides fuel for our hairy fire. Checkpoints may be held at a single bar, or depending on the size of your city and the location of your Growers, they may be held at different locations each week.

## Competition

The Sweetest Stache Competition is the jewel in the Mustache crown, a chance for Growers to strut their stuff under the encouraging gaze of the general public. The Competition should be a festive event whose ultimate goal is to identify and honor the Sweetest Mustache. To that end, we suggest a pageant-like structure, complete with several rounds of competitions that test the Growers' characters and personalities in addition to the merits of their Mustaches. Past rounds have included Q&A, touchability, pose-down/dance-off, and our signature event, the Beer Foam Retention Test.

We recommend selecting a panel of four to eight judges to adjudicate the proceedings. Judges should be thoroughly briefed about the elusive, and somewhat subjective, standards for determining Sweetness. We strive to find a balance between "the Mustache in itself" and "the Mustache and the Man". Meaning, attention should be paid to the objective traits of the Mustache (size, thickness, etc.) but also to the way in which the Mustache contributes to the Grower's character and demeanor. To that end, many Growers choose to dress in Mustache-enhancing costumes for the Competition. There is much debate in the Mustache community about whether such costumes detract from the purity of the judges' analysis. We leave it to each chapter to determine the dress code for its Sweetest Stache Competition.

It is typical for three awards to be distributed at the Competition: top fundraiser, Sweetest Stache, and worst Stache. Again, individual chapters may choose additional categories for recognition.

## Website

Since people seem to really love the internet as a way to get information, we highly suggest a website for your chapter. Members of your community should be able to visit your website to see pictures of growers and to find information about Mustache events and donation options. You have two options for establishing your internet presence:

- 1) Purchase a domain name and hosting plan and design the site yourself.
- 2) Design a page that can be 'parked' under the [mustachesforkids.com](http://mustachesforkids.com) umbrella site. There are several advantages to this approach. The first is that chapters whose sites are tied to the main site (for example, [mustachesforkids.com/\[city name\]](http://mustachesforkids.com/[city name])) do not have to pay for domain names or web hosting. Seems like a small expense, but if, say, ten chapters can eliminate these expenses, that's a pretty nice amount of additional money that can go to the charities. The other

advantage is that having one national site, with separate pages for each chapter, unifies our efforts a bit, while still allowing individual chapters a bit of autonomy in terms of design and information.

Should you be unable to design and maintain an independent web site or a page that exists under the umbrella site, our Canadian members are working on a handsome template that can be adapted to any chapter's needs.

We ask that chapter organizers let Mustache headquarters ([sweetstache@m4kny.org](mailto:sweetstache@m4kny.org)) know how they plan to proceed so that appropriate links can be added to our central site.

## **Publicity & Community Relations**

In today's media climate of "infotainment" it is likely that Mustaches for Kids will be an appealing news story in your community. We encourage organizers to distribute press releases, not only to those outlets who publish event or calendar listings, but also to those who might choose to feature M4K in a print, television, web, or radio story. Savvy editors and journalists recognize that M4K provides a rich source of material, from the Mustache-as-style angle to a piece that emphasizes the unconventional-yet-effective philanthropy

## **Paraphernalia**

We suggest that each chapter design, print, and distribute M4K business cards. Our venture, while true and just, is often greeted with a fair amount of skepticism. But even the most dubious naysayer is sure to be swayed by the veneer of legitimacy that a business card can provide. Furthermore, chapters may also produce pledge sheets for their Growers to use in the field. While we do not formally keep track of donor information, many people are swayed by the thrilling process of writing their name, contact information, and pledge amount on a spreadsheet. We cannot explain this phenomenon, but we do know that, like the business cards, pledge sheets add a certain cachet to our undertaking.

In recent years, several chapters have produced "Ask me about my mustache" buttons. Growers and donors alike seem to enjoy having a small Mustache souvenir. There are many web sites who provide this service.

The flagship New York chapter of M4K designs and produces totally sweet Mustaches for Kids t-shirts each year. The shirts are distributed at the Sweetest Stache Competition. Chapter organizers should contact the NY chapter ([sweetstache@m4kny.org](mailto:sweetstache@m4kny.org)) in late November to place an order. Each Grower who raises \$50 receives a shirt, and it is recommended that extra shirts be sold at the Sweetest Stache Competition. Proceeds from shirt sales are used to offset chapter operating expenses. Excess is donated to the charity.

## **Tax Deductions and Overhead Reimbursement**

At this time, Mustaches for Kids is not a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. As such, all checks should be made out to the organization that will be benefiting from your efforts. Chapter organizers should be able to provide tax deduction information when appropriate. Cash donations are not tax deductible.

Organizers who pay the minimal overhead (business cards, domain name, etc.) out of their pockets should reimburse themselves from the t-shirt proceeds or, if necessary, from the pool of cash donations.

We realize that this is not an ideal bookkeeping exercise, but unless you consider your outlay of money to be a donation, there is no other way to recoup your expenses.

### **A Final Note: Go Easy on Tom Selleck**

Many chapter organizers and Growers find it useful to invoke the spirit of famous Mustaches to motivate Growers and to provide a familiar backdrop for their efforts. We support such real-world comparisons, but we remind organizers that Tom Selleck, while he has a beautiful Mustache, is in danger of becoming a hackneyed exemplar. Consider further explorations into the worlds of sports, politics, history, and music as you search for images and role models.

### **Questions**

Our de facto M4K headquarters is the New York chapter. For any points that need further clarification, feel free to contact us at [sweetstache@m4kny.org](mailto:sweetstache@m4kny.org).